

Can you get more absurd than this?

It makes no sense—no sense whatsoever.

I would ask MARCO RUBIO to sleep on this overnight, Senator RUBIO.

His bill, which already passed the Senate separately, will not accomplish what he wants because it will just blow up the entire bill—the entire Defense Authorization Act.

But, instead, he came to the floor and objected when both Democratic and Republican leaders said we want to move forward, and so we can't move forward. This will be the first time that an NDAA bill has not moved forward, and it all falls on the shoulders of one Senator, MARCO RUBIO.

Now, I would hope my Republican colleagues who are listening to this, who have things in the bill they want, would go to Senator RUBIO and ask him to back off so tomorrow morning we might get started. But the odds of that are slim. The odds of that are slim.

I must say, Leader McCONNELL, Senator INHOFE, the ranking member, as well as JACK REED, and myself have worked hard together to accommodate Senators whenever we can, and that is why we had a list of 25 amendments. That is why we were prepared to sit here in 15-minute intervals and churn through those amendments.

But the Rubio amendment is a poison pill in the sense that it blows up the whole bill. Any one Member of the House can say, "I object to the bill," and, of course, one would, and that would be it.

So how does it help move forward on the NDAA bill? How does it even help Senator RUBIO's goals with the Uighurs by insisting on preventing anything from moving forward unless his proposal gets in the bill, which would destroy the bill?

That is the absurd place we are in tonight. It is regrettable. It is sad. It undoes the work of so many Senators on both sides of the aisle, and it speaks to the need to restore the Senate and change these rules.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3299

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3299) to prohibit the Department of Defense from discharging or withholding pay or benefits from members of the National Guard based on COVID-19 vaccination status.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

MORNING BUSINESS

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER S. RES. 27

Mr. CARPER, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,

Washington, DC, December 1, 2021.

To the Secretary of the Senate:

PN722, the nomination of Carlton Waterhouse, of Virginia, to be a Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste, Environmental Protection Agency, having been referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows—

On the question of reporting the nomination without recommendations, 10 ayes, to 10 noes.

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the Record pursuant to the resolution.

THOMAS R. CARPER,
Chair.

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER S. RES. 27

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,

Washington, DC, December 1, 2021.

To the Secretary of the Senate:

PN1156, the nomination of Mr. Alvaro Bedoya, of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission, having been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, the Committee, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows:

1) On the question of reporting the nomination favorably with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed, 14 ayes to 14 noes; and

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee on Commerce has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the Record pursuant to the resolution.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
MARIA CANTWELL,
Chair.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, on December 1, we mark the 33rd anniversary of World AIDS Day, which gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the lives lost to HIV/AIDS, how far we have come in the fight against this virus, and what we need to do to ensure an AIDS-free future.

Since the first cases of AIDS were reported domestically in June 1981, more than 700,000 Americans have tragically died due to AIDS-related complications. Significant scientific advances, brought about by public and private partnerships, led to the development of antiretroviral therapies—ARTs—which have been instrumental in decreasing AIDS-related mortality rates by more than 80 percent since they peaked in 1995. Investment in U.S. disease surveillance, prevention, and public education has similarly led to an almost 50-percent decline in the incidence of infection since 2010.

We are fortunate to have premier scientific research institutes within my home State of Maryland working together to combat this deadly virus. The National Institutes of Health, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland all lead U.S. and global research on developing treatments and a vaccine for HIV/AIDS. The world-class research institutions housed in Maryland have not only substantially led the scientific advancements with respect to HIV/AIDS; they have also played a significant role in reducing the number of new cases among Marylanders and affording those who contract HIV/AIDS to continue living full lives. Across Maryland, more than 30,000 adults or adolescents were living with HIV at the end of 2020.

Though my State ranks seventh among all U.S. States and Territories in HIV diagnosis rates per 100,000 people, we are making great strides to prevent new infections. Last year, Maryland recorded fewer than 1,000 new cases of HIV infection for the third consecutive year and a significant decrease over the peak of 2,612 new HIV infections among Marylanders in 1991. Public health initiatives the Maryland Department of Health implemented have been instrumental in reducing new infections, including programs like safe-sex education programs, condom distribution, access to prophylactic medication, and a statewide needle-exchange program for injection drug users.

Today, approximately 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV, and they are able to lead healthier and safer lives due to increased access to care under the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act, ACA. The ACA has led to increased patient protections such as the prohibitions on rate-setting tied to health status, the elimination of preexisting condition exclusions, and an end to lifetime and annual dollar limits. Still, there are challenges ahead. Increasing prescription drug costs for ART regimens and health insurance benefit designs that shift out-of-pocket costs onto patients risk the progress we have made to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

Although Federal financial support to Medicaid, the largest source of insurance coverage for people living with